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No. 9.

Where the Trail Ends.

By George M. Rosener.

A One Act Drama of Life in the Canadian Woods, Written to be Adapted to Vaudeville.

ADOLPH E. REIM,

Publisher,

MILWAUKEE, - WISCONSIN.

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A DRAMA OF LIFE IN THE CANADIAN WOODS, IN ONE ACT.

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PS635
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CHARACTERS.

FRANCOIS.....*A Trapper.*
JEAN.....*A Trapper.*
NANETTE.....*The Wife Of Jean.*

SCENE.

SCENE—JEAN'S *Cabin in the Canadian woods.*
TIME—*Night.*
SEASON—*Winter.*
Time of Playing: About Twenty minutes.

DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS.

(*All use a slight Canuck dialect*).

FRANCOIS—*A young trapper of about twenty-five years of age. Kind and gentle, yet possessing the impetuous temperament of the Canuck. He is clean shaven and wears conventional dress of the Canadian woodsman.*

JEAN—*A trapper of about forty years of age. To say he is a drunken villain is a good description of his character. His hair is touched with grey and he wears a black beard and mustache. His clothes are similar to those of* FRANCOIS'.

NANETTE—*A young woman of about twenty years of age, who at times looks ten years older than she really is, this is due to the unjust sufferings and privations she has undergone at the hands of* JEAN. *Like some wild animal she is submissive to these humiliations, though her heart is always seeking a freedom and a love that she knows of, but never knew. Her clothes are of the coarsest material.*

WHERE THE TRAIL ENDS.

DESCRIPTION OF SET.

(*Interior of a log cabin, if unavailable use kitchen. Doors R. and L. and D. I. F. R. Window I. F. L. Between door and window I. F. is an old cupboard in which are bottles, glasses and other crude table wear. An old stove is set against the wall down L. Hanging on the wall behind the stove and on the stove itself are various cooking utensils. A little L. of C. is a kitchen table, close to which are three chairs. (Two without backs). Over R. is a home made bench on which is a bucket, dipper, wash basin and soap. Hanging on the wall close by, is a coarse towel. On one side of the D. I. F. hang various old clothes, on the other a number of traps. Above the door is a rifle suspended from a pair of deer horns. A lighted lantern hangs in the window, underneath of which is a lot of newly cut wood for the stove. Hanging from the walls are various hides, blankets, etc. Five or six lighted candles are set about in available places*).

(*At rise of curtain, the lights are about one quarter down. If possible use red and blue. Back of window is a snow scape showing the pine trees covered with frost and snow. The rising and falling of the wind is heard throughout the act*).

(*There is a short pause after the curtain has risen, nothing is heard save the simmering of cooking on the stove and the wind without.* NANETTE *enters from L. she first arranges some cooking on the stove and then looks out of window. Cautiously she looks about her and then draws a letter from her breast, which she reads by the light of a candle. Sleigh bells are heard off in the distance, gradually coming nearer and nearer. So engrossed is* NANETTE *in her letter that she does not hear the bells until they are close at hand. It is then she comes to her feet with a start, and in a hurried effort to conceal the letter in her breast, she drops it close by the stove on the floor. The sleigh bells stop without.* NANETTE *takes up her place by the stove. The D. I. F. swings open and* JEAN *enters*).

Jean—Supper ready?

Nane—Yes.

Jean—Now queek, queek. I am in a hurry.

Nane—It will take but a minute, Jean.

Jean—(*Hanging up his mackinaw and hat*). A minute! A minute! It is always in a minute. Bah! You are lazy! Have a care Madam Nanette, I tell you, or you will again feel de weight of my belt.

Nane—Did you sell the land to-day Jean?

Jean—(*Getting bottle and glass from cupboard*). Did I sell de and? So! And what is that of your business? (*He drinks*).

Nane—It is my land left to me by my father.

Jean—(*Sarcastically*). Your land? So, Madam must have her joke. (*Laughs uproariously*). Left to me by my father! (*He laughs again*). Ha! It is a good joke, Madam. It make me laugh. So be it, you are correct, de land she is left by your father. De drunken pig! Yet Madam forgets that she is my wife and what is her's is mine also. I sell de land Madam. Yes. Maybe now you think you shall have some of de money. Bein! Here it is! (*Takes out a large roll of money*). And understand, Madam Nanette it is mine. You will please to understand it is all mine. Bein! And now to supper.

Nane—As you will. (*In arranging the supper on the table, she is about to remove the bottle of liquor*).

Jean—Let him here.

Nane—I think you have had enough, Jean.

Jean—You think nothing, Madam! You let him here as I order it!

Nane—This is all we have in the cabin.

Jean—So? Then I shall have to send you to St. Ann's for more. (*Snatches the bottle from her hand*). When I order, Madam, you obey! (*He strikes her with his open hand. For a brief second all the Indian blood in her body rebels*).

Nane—You will do that once too often Jean!

Jean—Sacre! So you threaten. (*He draws his gun with his right hand and with his left he takes her by the shoulder and draws her to him*). Here! You see dis? Some day you play on me your Indian tricks and——Well. You understand! Now get de coffee. (*She places the coffee and other eatables on the table*).

Nane—Jean, I have something to ask of you.

Jean—(*Eating*) So?

Nane—Have I not always been a good wife to you?

Jean—Bein! And what then?

Nane—You never were like this when we were first married and came here from Montreal. Sometimes I—I—I know I am a fool to think it, but sometimes I cannot help but think that maybe someone else has taken my place. (*She tries to laugh and throw off her well founded doubts of his loyalty*). Of course, it is not so, I know, Jean. But I do sometimes think of it. It is the fool in me; is it not so, Jean?

Jean—Bah! It is now you do talk like a fool. You say you have a question to ask of me. Tres Bien! Do so!

Nane—Have I not always been a good and faithful wife?

Jean—Good and faithful? Sapristi! Yes! So good that I get tired of your goodness! So faithful that I hate it more and more every day! You say, is there another woman I desire? And I say yes there is. So, now you have it.

Nane—It is true then my dear that you love another?

Jean—Did I not say so? Bah, you make me seek! When I get ready Madame, you will know what I shall do to you? No? I shall then sell you to some Indian and go to live in Montreal like a gentleman.

Nane—You would not dare to do such a sin! You would not dare!

Jean—So? Maybe you think that. Bien! We shall see.

Nane—Jean! The time has come when you and me must know each other's thought. It can no longer be dog and master with us. The time is now for a better understanding. You say you will sell me to the Indians when you have finished wih me? Bien! Sooner than that I die. It is an oath, Jean, so I say to you, beware!

Jean—Have a care, Nanette, perhaps you will go too far with your pretty talk.

Nane—Jean, I desire to know——

Jean—You desire to know nothing, but my cartridge belt across your shoulders and that you shall have if another word is spoken. (NANE. *starts for D. I. F.*). Where you go now?

Nane—To get some air.

Jean—Here is your way. (*Points L.*).

Nane—I must have some air.

Jean—And I say you must not! There to bed! It is time. (NANE *exits L.* JEAN *sits at table and drinks more of the liquor*). Bah, so it is when you are disgusted with a woman! But

it shall not be for long, Chere Ami! (*Laughs uproariously*). Sapristi! It shall not be for long. (*He sees the letter laying on the floor close by the stove, he picks it up and reads with measured pace laboring over the pronunciation of the words*). "My love Nanette:— I come to-night, for the last time to ask you once again to come with me. I love you. Francois." (*He crushes the letter in his hand*). Francois! So Madame has a lover. She dare! She dare do this to me! (*He draws his gun and starts for D. L.*). To-night, I fix this. When Francois comes, he can bury her if he wants to. Softly, softly Jean, there is a better way. (*He puts up his gun and pauses as if in meditation, his face brightens as an idea seems to come to him. He smoothes out the letter and lays it back where he found it. He then goes back to D. L. and calls off*). Nanette! Nanette!

Nanette—(*Off stage L.*). Yes.

Jean—I am to ride to Lake St. Ann to-night.

Nane—(*Enters D. L.*). To-night?

Jean—(*Pressing his hand about her throat*). Yes, to-night! You understand, to-night! To Lake St. Ann, to-night! (*He takes another drink*). Nanette, you say your prayers every night, Bien?

Nanette—Yes, you know I do so always.

Jean—Then to-night you say one Rosary extra for your soul, Madame

Nane—Why should I do that?

Jean—Did you not hear the she wolf when she cried at the moon to-night? You know the sign. Death to-night is tracking a woman! Maybe it is you. Who can tell? Maybe — Maybe — We shall see. (*He puts on his mackinaw, cap and mittens*). Bon Nuit Madame! Bon Nuit! (*Exit D. I. F.*).

Nane—(*Listens at the door to the sleigh bells as they die off in the distance, she then feels for the letter, which she thinks is safe in her breast, she discovers that it is not there and speaks in the awed half whisper of a person badly startled*). Virgin Mother! I have lost it! (*She looks about the floor and discovers it where she had dropped it. With a cry of joy, she picks it up and safely places it in her breast*). Could Jean have seen this? No, no I am sure not. He would have killed me at once. I know him well enough for that. (*She drops to her knees beside of chair on the left of table and prays*). Mother of Mary, I give thee thanks! Mother of Mary, I give thee thanks. (*She quickly raises her head and listens, as if she heard a noise, being assured;*

she is at the D. I. F. without loss of time and locks it. There is a knock at the door. NANE *listens without answering. The knock is repeated*). Who is there?

Fran.—(*On the other side of the door*). It is I Nanette. Francois!

Nane—You should not have come here now.

Fran.—Let me in Nanette. I must see you!

Nane—Not now, Francois. Come to-morrow night.

Fran.—No, to-night, to-night, Nanette, I must see you just for a moment.

Nane.—No Francois, not now! To-morrow night perhaps, but not now!

Fran.—To-morrow night it will be too late. I go away when the moon is high. (*Nanette opens the door and Francois enters. He attempts to take her in his arms, but she gently keeps him off*).

Nane.—No, no, Francois! Wait! You say you are to leave when the moon is high?

Fran.—I go on a journey, Nanette.

Nane.—(*Closing the door*). You saw Jean, as he left but a moment ago?

Fran.—Yes, I waited until he was well along the trail before I knocked.

Nane.—You should not have come here to-night, Francois. You promised not to come again until I sent for you.

Fran.—To stay away Nanette, is for me impossible. Nanette, better than my own life I love you. (*He takes her hand, but she gently draws it away*).

Nane.—Not that Francois! Not that! Remember your promise.

Fran.—(*Quickly sweeps her into his arms*). Nanette, say that you do not love me, Chere Ami, and I swear by the Virgin, I shall never see you again!

Nane.—I cannot say that! Heaven help me! Francois, I cannot say that.

Fran.—Then why not leave here? Why not come away with me to-night?

Nane.—Because I am the wife of Jean Bateau.

Fran.—His wife? You are his slave! Does he not treat you like the very dirt under his feet? Nanette, sometimes at night up there in my cabin, when I think that you are here with him, I have to pray to the Virgin for help, that I might not come here

and kill him as he sleeps.

Nane.—(*Startled*). What is that?

Fran.—It is nothing but my horse, he knows the wolves are about to-night.

Nane.—You had better go now. I fear Francois! I fear!

Fran.—Chere Ami, you are nervous. Has he been beating you again? Ah! I can see in your face the answer. God! It is well I leave to-night, well for him.

Nane.—In truth, then you do really go away to-night?

Fran.—Yes, I go south, my Nanette.

Nane.—You will be away for long?

Fran.—For a year, maybe.

Nane.—A year? I shall not see you for one whole year?

Fran.—Nanette, it need not be so. See I am ready to take you with me now. To-morrow we will be far away. It is so ordained, Nanette, I love you, Chere Ami! How much it is you alone, who knows!

Nane.—Say no more, Francois. I have temptation enough without this, so please say no more. I love you, is that not enough? Can you not wait? I love you alone, Francois! Oh, how I love you. Oh——God, God, my soul is in danger! Help me! Help me! (*She drops to the floor crying*).

Fran.—(*Raising her to her feet*). Come Nanette! Come with me! It is I, Francois, who asks it, Francois who loves you!

Nane.—(*Regaining her composure*). No, no Francois! I must stay!

Fran.—Why; I ask you why?

Nane.—Because I am his wife. It is right.

Fran.—Right? You are his slave, that is right. You stay here where he beats you, where he treats you like a dog? Maybe it is that you love him.

Nane—Francois! You can say this to me when I have already sinned in telling you of my love for you? You too then, I see would hurt me. As Jean treats me not so much does it hurt me, as when you doubt me. I am his wife, Jean. If I should not be true to him maybe, how then could I be true to you? No, Francois, trust me, love me, but do not now ask me to sin. Is it not enough that I love you, Francois? Answer me, is it not enough?

Fran.—(*With bowed head*). Yes.

Nane.—Then, though my heart gets sick, I must tell you now to go. Come back in one year, then maybe it shall be all different.

Fran.—You mean you will leave him then?

Nane.—No! Never will it be like that while he lives, but perhaps he will leave me. Who can tell? He has said it many times.

Fran.—A year, Nanette? A year? Chere Ami! I cannot suffer so long.

Nane.—Do not I wait and suffer also, Francois?

Fran.—True, my Nanette. You are right, I must go alone. I will leave now while I am strong.

Nane.—My brave Francois.

Fran.—You will wish me Bon Voyage and say I love you once again before I go. (*He holds out his hand, which she takes*).

Nane.—Bon Voyage, my Francois, I love you! (FRANCOIS *kisses her hand and starts for D. I. F. The door opens and* JEAN *enters*).

Jean—Ah! Salute! M. Francois! You are visiting, is it not so? You do Madam Nanette and myself much honor. Is it not so, Ma Chere? Ah, yes, see how her eyes shine. She is beautiful, my Nanette. Is it not so, M. Francois?

Fran.—It is right that you should think so. (*Francois starts for D. I. F.* JEAN *steps in front of him*).

Jean—You are not leaving us, M. Francois?

Fran.—Yes. I go south to-night.

Jean—So? We will miss you. It is sad.

Fran.—I am behind my time and must say farewell!

Jean—Tut. Tut! You must first have a glass of cognac. (*He takes* FRANCOIS *by the arm and leads him to the table*). Come Madam some more glasses. (NANETTE *stands staring at* JEAN *as if she read his design*). Madam do you not hear? Some more glasses! Is it a ghost you see that you look so pale? Hasten Madam! (NANETTE *gets two more glasses, which she sets on the table*). M. Francois has a long journey before him. (JEAN *pours out three glasses of liquor*). A long——long——journey. (JEAN *is behind the table,* FRAN. *is on the R. and* NANETTE *is on the L.* FRANCOIS *and* NANETTE *stand looking at each other, as if they read each other's thoughts.* JEAN *looks up and notes their exchange of glances*). Now what is it, that you both stand staring? Sapristi! You are cheerful companions! Bien, we will drink! Monsieur! (*He hands a glass of liquor to* FRAN.). Madam! (*He hands a glass of liquor to* NANETTE).

Nanette—I do not care for the cognac, Jean.

Jean—Sacre! You insult Monsieur and myself. (*Speaking*

through his teeth and half aside to NANETTE). It is my wish that you drink. (NANETTE *takes the glass*). And now I shall give a toast. "To other men's wives." (NANETTE *starts and drops her glass to the floor*). Sapristi! Madam you are clumsy! You do not drink M. Francois?

Fran.—To that toast ? No!

Jean—So? Then I shall give another. Here it is! Let other men's wives alone. (JEAN *drinks.* FRANCOIS *is about to refuse to drink and to resent* JEAN'S *insult, when he catches* NANETTE'S *eye. She makes a signal that he should drink and avoid trouble.* FRAN. *drinks and sets his glass on the table*). And now Madam to bed! I have some business to discuss with Monsieur.

Nan—I am not tired Jean and——

Jean—(*Threateningly*). You can hardly keep your eyes open, Madam. (*Points L.*). To bed! (*Aside*) And do not return here until morning. (NANETTE *exits L.*).

Fran.—You will please hasten with the business you spoke of, Monsieur, I am eager to be off.

Jean—We shall come to that presently, my Francois. You will be interested, I know when I tell you that it concerns Madam Nanette alone.

Fran.—I do not quite understand. I think perhaps it would be better if we talked on this another time.

Jean—No, no, my Francois! We must talk now. You will excuse me Francois if I save the candles. (*Blows out all the candles, but the one on the table. As he blows out each candle the lights go down a little*). Candles, Francois cost money and I am a poor man. Bien! So it is. (*He comes back to the table*). And now to business. I wish to ask your advice first of all Francois. It is I fear that Nanette has a lover. (FRAN. *starts*). Keep your seat, my Francois, for that is not all. Now I ask you, my Francois, if it was you in my place, which one would you kill the lover or Nanette? For surely one of them must die. Now which do you say?

Fran.—I cannot. I fear to talk longer on this subject.

Jean—So? I understand! Bien! You do not wish to say. Then it shall be Nanette. She shall die to-night.

Fran.—(*Starts to his feet*). You would kill her?

Jean—(*Draws his gun and points it at* FRAN.). You are excitable, my Francois. And who knows what damage you will do with your gun? I will now trouble you to give it to me for safe keep-

ing.

Fran.—What?

Jean—Your gun and queek! I am not to be made a fool of, my Francois! It is you who understands that now I think. (FRAN. *takes his gun and lays it on the table.* JEAN *tosses it under the stove*). Now you dog, we will talk without fear comment!

Fran.—Look Jean! Remember this I have done no wrong, neither has Nanette. Remember this also, that I tried to leave before you commenced this damnable work.

Jean—Sapristi, do I not understand it all? She was getting ready to leave with you to-night, just as I entered.

Fran.—Bateau, you lie and you know it, when you say that!

Jean—Have a care how you raise your voice, you dog of a she wolf! If you think to bring Nanette to your aid, I tell you this, before she has crossed the threshold of the door I will send a bullet in her heart!

Fran.—If you were but half a man you crawling skunk, you would——

Jean—It is enough! You are to listen, I will speak, I want no more of your lies!

Fran.—Lies? You think I fear to tell the truth? So? Then listen! I love Nanette, it is true, I love her so much that if I thought it would make her happy by giving up my life, now this minute would I spring at your throat and though you sent a bullet in my brain, I would succeed in tearing your heart out, before I went to meet my God. She has taught me how true a woman can be to a man, even when that man is but a dog. Bien! It is enough!

Jean—And all this he would do for a woman! Sacre! It is a strange world. Hark, you dog! You love this she wolf that I cast off? You love her? So? Then will I bargain with you. I will sell her to you for $50,000. What do you say to that, Monsieur?

Fran.—I say this, that I have never seen the dog or the son of a dog, that is as low as the one I see before me now.

Jean—By Gar, it is the end! You know now what I am going to do? No? First I shall kill you and then she will I sell to the Indian, who pays the biggest price. That makes your face go pale, you know well what that means, Bien! If you wish to pray Monsieur, pray, for in one minute you die! On my mother's soul it is an oath! (*For about ten seconds they stand looking at each*

other. Then FRANCOIS *knocks the candle from the table and drops to the floor beside of the table. All the lights go out.* JEAN *shoots, the flash of the gun is seen to go over the table in the direction of where* FRANCOIS *was standing. There is a struggle in the dark, again the gun is discharged, then silence.* NANETTE *enters L. with a lighted candle, the lights still remain out, the audience get a glimpse of* JEAN *laying on the floor and* FRAN. *standing C.).*

Nane.—Francois!

Fran.—(*Taking the candle from her and folding her in his arms*). Nanette! Chere Ami! My Nanette!

—*SLOW CURTAIN.*—

Sacre, *is pronounced Sacra.*
Sapristi, *is pronounced Sapristc.*
Francois, *is pronounced Franswa.*
Chere Ami, *is pronounced Cher Aame.*
Salute, *is pronounced Salu.*
Bien, *is pronounced Be-a.*
Tres Bien, *is pronounced Tra Be-a*

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